

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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O R 241520Z JUL 75
FM AMCONSUL LUANDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3843
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

S E C R E T LUANDA 0968

NOFORN

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI AO
SUBJECT: FNLA BEGINS ATTACK ON CAXITO

CINCLANT AND CINCEUR FOR POLAD

1. THE AIR FORCE COMMANDER IN ANGOLA, BRIGADIER VALENTE, TOLD ME ON JULY 24 THAT FNLA BEGAN AN ATTACK ON CAXITO THAT MORNING. HE SAID THE ATTACK WAS NOT MASSIVE, NOR DID HE EXPECT LARGE, SET PIECE BATTLES TO TAKE PLACE.

2. PORTUGUESE AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE HAS NOT PROVIDED MUCH INFORMATION, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE THE FNLA IS NOT MOVING IN LARGE COLUMNS. VALENTE SAID THAT THE COASTAL ROAD SOUTH TO AMBRIZ IS OBVIOUSLY BEING USED TO MOVE MEN AND EQUIPMENT. THE PHOTOS DO NOT SHOW GREAT ACTIVITY, BUT THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING MOVING. THE SAME IS TRUE FOR THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO CARMONA FROM THE NORTH. FNLA HAS LARGE CONCENTRATIONS OF TROOPS IN THE AREA AND ITS BEST FIGHTING FORCE, ACCORDING

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TO VALENTE, IS AT A BASE NEAR CARMONA.

3. THE INTERIOR REGIONS EAST OF LUANDA, CONTINUED VALENTE, ARE A SHAMBLES; DALANTANDO (SALAZAR) IS A DESERTED CITY AND MALANGE WILL BE SOON. HUNDREDS OF WHITES HAVE FLED IN PANIC LEAVING EVERYTHING BEHIND. HENRIQUE DE CARVALHO IS IN MPLA HANDS AND IT, TOO, IS VIRTUALLY A GHOST TOWN.

4. VALENTE SEES NO RATIONAL SOLUTION TO THE CURRENT CONFLICT. NEITHER SIDE THINKS, BUT ACTS ON EMOTION. FOR INSTANCE, IT WAS IN THE MPLA INTEREST TO GET FNLA OUT OF LUANDA AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, BUT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR WITHDRAWAL OF EXCESS TROOPS THAT BEGAN LAST WEEK, IT WAS THE MPLA THAT INSISTED ON CONDITIONS, THEREBY PLAYING INTO FNLA'S STRATEGY OF STALLING FOR TIME UNTIL THE ATTACK COULD BEGIN FROM THE NORTH. AS THE TWO SIDES WERE NEGOTIATING A NEW CEASEFIRE IN THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COMMISSION THE AFTERNOON OF JULY 23, MORTARS AND OTHER HEAVY WEAPONS COULD BE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE. FNLA HAS NO ONE WITH ANY BRAINS OR SKILL AND THE MPLA IS PRETTY LIGHT ON TALENT ONCE YOU GET BELOW AGOSTINHO NETO AND LUCIO LARA. THE VAUNTED NITO ALVES, HE SAID, IS A BLOWHARD WITH LITTLE INTELLECTUAL EQUIPMENT.
KILLORAN

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